

State of Delaware Announces Class for State Employees on Employing People with Disabilities

Online course focuses on abilities of people with disabilities

Dover, DE –Beginning this month, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, all State of Delaware employees will be able to access a new online class, *Focus on Ability*. This class will provide information about hiring and retaining employees with disabilities, including responding to and requesting accommodations, understanding invisible disabilities, and interacting comfortably and respectfully with people who have disabilities.

“Employing people with disabilities is a necessity if the State wants to hire and retain the best employees to run state government efficiently and effectively,” said Governor Jack Markell. “By offering this course to all state employees, we are ensuring we provide every person with the best possible chance to achieve personal and professional success.”

The course is being offered in correlation with the initiative Governor Markell championed as Chairperson of the National Governors Association (NGA) – *A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities*. As part of his NGA initiative, Governor Markell encouraged governors from every state to focus on employing people with disabilities in their own states and encouraged states to become model employers by increasing the number of people with disabilities working in state government.

Governor Markell believes strongly that government, business, the general public and individuals with disabilities and their

families all stand to benefit from increased employment of people with disabilities, and all of these groups have a role and shared responsibility in reaching this goal.

“Advancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities is the right thing to do as a society. It’s the smart thing for government to do, and it makes good business sense,” said Governor Markell. “There are so many people with disabilities who have the time, talent, and desire to make meaningful contributions to interested employers. What matters is what they have to offer and the tremendous impact that their employment will have on their overall well-being and on overall productivity of the businesses that employ them.”

While people with disabilities bring valuable skills to the workforce, a simple lack of awareness can be a barrier to job access for them. Research shows that employees with disabilities have strong attendance records, are loyal to their employers and have nearly identical job performance ratings to employees without disabilities. More than 600,000 scientists and engineers currently employed in the United States have disabilities. The State of Delaware has a variety of jobs filled with employees who have disabilities, including cerebral palsy, autism, and physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities. State of Delaware employees with disabilities hold a variety of jobs, including Accounting Specialists, Division Directors, Judicial Case Processors, Management Analysts, Equipment Operators and Social Workers.

Focus on Ability will be offered free of charge to all state employees. For more information, visit the Statewide Training and Development website at: <http://delawarepersonnel.com/training/online/>. If employees have any problems registering on the website, they can reach the Statewide Training and Development Office at (302) 577-8977.